

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAMA KO 01138 251135Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 /055 W
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R 251034Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5984
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMA KO 1138

DAKAR FOR DATT

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: UR, FR, ML, MPOL, MILI

SUBJECT: SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MALI -
A FRENCH VIEW

1. DCM AND EMBASSY'S DEFENSE ATTACHE (RESIDENT IN DAKAR) CALLED MARCH 21 ON FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE IN BAMA KO, LT. COL. CLAUDE MAQUIN, TO DISCUSS SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MALI. MAQUIN SAID MALIANS PLACED PRIORITY ON DEVELOPING THEIR AIR FORCE. THERE ARE ABOUT 80 MALIANS NOW TRAINING IN SOVIET UNION, INCLUDING PILOTS, RADAR TECHNICIANS, MAINTENANCE SPECIALISTS, AND RUNWAY REPAIR TECHNICIANS. IN SHORT, SAID MAQUIN, MALIANS WERE DEVELOPING NEEDED INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT AN AIR FORCE, OR, HE ADDED, A SOVIET AIR FORCE
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PRESENCE.

2. MAQUIN HAD HEARD RUMORS OF SOVIET ACTIVITY IN ADRAR DES IFORAS SECTION IN REMOTE SIXTH REGION NEAR ALGERIAN BORDER. THERE WERE NATURAL AIRSTRIPS IN THAT AREA THAT COULD BE USED, ALTHOUGH THE LOGISTIC PROBLEMS WOULD BE ENORMOUS.

AREA IS BARREN ROCK AND DESERT POPULATED SPARSELY BY NOMADIC TRIBESMEN.

3. SOVIETS WERE ALSO PROVIDING EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING IN ARMOR AND ARTILLERY, BUT THE TANKS WERE WORLD WAR II RELICS -- ABOUT 30 T-34'S. MAQUIN SAID HE HAD NOT HEARD OF ANY T-62 MODEL TANKS IN MALI. MAQUIN HAD COUNTED SIX ADDITIONAL T-34'S DELIVERED TO MALI VIA GUINEA IN LATE 1976.

4. MAQUIN NOTED THAT MALIANS HAD, BY SAHELIAN STANDARDS, A RESPECTABLE MILITARY FORCE. EVEN THE OLD TANKS REPRESENTED IMPRESSIVE FIREPOWER AGAINST OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES. YET, SAID MAQUIN, THE MALIANS LACKED THE LOGISTIC FACILITIES TO GO MUCH BEYOND THEIR OWN BORDERS. SENEGAL AND IVORY COAST WOULD ONLY HAVE TO CUT THE RAIL-ROAD AND THE ROADS LEADING TO MALI AND MALIAN ARMED FORCES WOULD BE CUT OFF. PERHAPS IN THE FAR DISTANT FUTURE SOVIET LOGISTIC SUPPORT -- FROM THE NORTH -- MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO CARRY MALI AGAINST ITS COASTAL NEIGHBORS, BUT THAT WAS FARFETCHED. MAQUIN DOUBTED THAT THE MALIANS HAD ANY TERRITORIAL DESIGNS ON THEIR NEIGHBORS.
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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